

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 4131

USIAC

IMV FOR SCOTT; IEU FOR SHIRLEY; DEPT. FOR EUR

E.O. 11652:
SUBJECT: MATERIAL FOR RAI-TV

1. IN SEPARATE, LENGTHY CONVERSATIONS WITH RAI'S TWO TOP EXECUTIVES -- PAOLO GRASSI (PSI), PRESIDENT, AND GIUSEPPE GLISENTI (DC), DIRECTOR GENERAL, BOTH OF WHOM ARE JUST SETTLING INTO THEIR NEW JOBS -- SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RAI-USIS COLLABORATION HAVE EMERGED.

2. THE MOST IMMEDIATE CONCERNS A REQUEST BY GLISENTI, WHO AS A FORMER BUSINESS EXECUTIVE (LA RINASCENTE) WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN TELEVISION IS ANXIOUS AT LEAST TO ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE MORE METHODOICAL AND BUSINESSLIKE PRACTICES IN RAI PROGRAM PRODUCTION. HE IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW AMERICAN NETWORKS GO ABOUT DECIDING WHAT KINDS OF PROGRAMS SHOULD BE AIRED, AND HOW THEY CARRY OUT MARKETING AND PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH IN ORDER TO CREATE THE PROGRAMS THAT THE GREATEST NUMBER OF POTENTIAL AUDIENCE WILL WISH TO VIEW. THIS WOULD INCLUDE PRE-AIRING RESEARCH ON AUDIENCE POTENTIAL, AS WELL AS RATING SYSTEMS EMPLOYED FOLLOWING TELECASTS. HIS INTEREST HERE IS IN TRYING TO GIVE RAI AUDIENCES MORE OF WHAT THEY REALLY WANT, RATHER THAN PROGRAMS

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PRODUCED (ALL TOO OFTEN FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL REASONS) BY CERTAIN VESTED INTERESTS.

3. SINCE RAI IS NON-COMMERICAL, FOR THE MOST PART, SOME USEFUL PARALLELS MIGHT BE DRAWN FROM PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION PROCEDURES AND EXPERIENCE.

4. ACCORDINGLY, POST SPECIFICALLY REQUESTS FOLLOWING:

A. CONCISE BUT FAIRLY THOROUGH PRINTED MATERIAL THAT WILL EXPLAIN HOW MAJOR US NETWORKS -- WITH EMPHASIS ON PBC -- RESEARCH AND MAKE DECISION REGARDING THE SCHEDULING AND PRODUCTION OF MAJOR PROGRAMS. WE ARE NOT SURE HOW DEEP OR BROAD GLISENTI WANTS TO GO INTO THIS SUBJECT, SO SUGGEST THE AGENCY PROVIDE A FIRST BASIC SET OF PAPERS, WHICH CAN THEN BE AMPLIFIED AS NECESSARY.

B. VTR SAMPLE PROGRAMS. THESE WOULD BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL IF RELATED TO CASE STUDIES OF RESEARCH SET FORTH IN THE PRINTED MATTER, ABOVE. HERE AGAIN, WE MIGHT START MODESTLY AND EXPAND AS POSSIBLE; PERHAPS EIGHT TO TEN SAMPLES FROM PBC OF VARIOUS TYPES PROGRAMS -- EDUCATIONAL, ENTERTAINMENT, OPINION/PUBLIC AFFAIRS -- COULD FIRST BE PROVIDED, AS AVAILABLE. (RAI ENGINEERS TELL US THAT THE ONLY TECHNICAL REQUIREMENT IS THAT THE TAPE BE RECORDED WITH THE UMATIC SYSTEM, THEREBY MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR RAI TO CONVERT FROM THE US STANDARD ON THEIR MACHINES.)

5. NEITHER GLISENTE NOR GRASSI HAS MANY CONTACTS IN THE US TELEVISION FIELD AS YET, THOUGH GRASSI IS SCHEDULED TO BE IN NEW YORK STARTING MARCH 24 FOR THE US PREMIERE OF THE THREE-NATION PRODUCTION "JESUS OF NAZARETH" JUST FINISHED BY DIRECTOR FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI, AND HE SAYS THAT RAI AND AMBASSADOR GAJA HAVE SET UP A SERIES OF MEETINGS FOR HIM AT THAT TIME.

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6. TO UNDERSCORE THE OBVIOUS, WE HAVE BEFORE US AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY TO SOLIDIFY RAPPORT WITH TWO OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS TODAY IN ITALIAN MEDIA, WHO ARE SELF-PROFESSED ADMIRERS OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES, AND WHO NOW NEED ALL THE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE THEY CAN OBTAIN FROM FRIENDLY SOURCES. THE POST PLACES TOP PRIORITY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF USEFUL MATERIALS ASAP, AND LOOKS FORWARD TO AGENCY SUGGESTIONS AND ASSISTANCE. AMERSON

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